

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claim 1 as follows:

Sub E1
Claim 1 (Twice amended) A cellulose acetate obtained by the reaction of a cellulose, which may contain a hemicellulose, with acetic anhydride in the presence of a sulfuric acid catalyst and having at least one feature selected from the group consisting of:

(i) said cellulose acetate has carboxyl groups wherein at least part of the carboxyl groups are free carboxyl groups;

X
(ii) said cellulose acetate contains at least one member selected from the group consisting of an acid having an acid dissociation exponent pKa of 1.93 to 4.50 in water, an alkali metal salt of said acid and an alkaline earth metal salt of said acid; and

(iii) said cellulose acetate contains an alkali metal or an alkaline earth metal, wherein the total content of the alkali metal and the alkaline earth metal in 1 gram of the cellulose acetate is 5.5×10^{-6} equivalent or less in terms of ion equivalent; and

wherein said cellulose acetate is soluble in an organic solvent.